



An Enlarged Community Park Prevents Damage To Homes

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Skagit County, Washington

Skagit County, WA — After 34 homes on the west side of the Skagit River, opposite downtown Mount Vernon, were severely damaged in the 1996 floods, city officials concluded it was time to take aggressive steps to prevent this kind of damage in the future.

In partnership with the Washington State Division of Emergency Management and FEMA, the City of Mount Vernon acquired 34 flood-prone properties. The designated houses were then demolished (or moved), and the entire site was combined to form an enlarged community park.

The acquisition totaled approximately \$2,375,000, financed from the post-disaster Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Substantial though the grant was, its total amount pales in comparison to the cost of replacing and repairing the homes that stood there.

During the 2003 flooding, the entire park was under water again. But this time there were no homes to repair or replace, and no people to evacuate or rescue. After the water receded, all that needed doing was some minor cleanup.

The City of Mount Vernon saved itself from serious flooding, thanks to thousands of citizens who filled and stacked sandbags to protect the downtown area, and to city planners who took steps to minimize future damage after the 1995-96 floods.



Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region X**

State: **Washington**

County: **Skagit County**

City/Community: **Mount Vernon**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**

Activity/Project Start Date: **10/1996**

Activity/Project End Date: **10/1999**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **City of Mount Vernon**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$2,375,000.00 (Estimated)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**

Year First Tested: **2003**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/benefits.jsp>**

Reference URL 2: **<http://emd.wa.gov/>**

Main Points

- After 34 homes on the west side of the Skagit River, opposite downtown Mount Vernon, were severely damaged in the 1996 floods, city officials concluded it was time to take aggressive steps to prevent this kind of damage in the future.
- In partnership with the Washington State Division of Emergency Management and FEMA, the City of Mount Vernon acquired 34 flood-prone properties.
- During the 2003 flooding, the entire park was under water again. But this time there were no homes to repair or replace, and no people to evacuate or rescue.